

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 43-82 are pending in the application, with Claims 47, 51, 55, 57, 66, 76, 77, 79, 81 and 82 amended by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 51-58, 79, and 81 were objected to for informalities; Claims 76 and 77 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Jakobson (U.S. Patent No. 3,992,093); Claims 81 and 82 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Strauch et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,278,587; hereinafter “Strauch”); Claims 43-50, 59-75, 78 and 80 were allowed; and Claims 51-58, and 79 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of the allowable subject matter.

Applicants acknowledge the telephone interview between the Examiner and Applicants’ representative on May 12, 2005. During the interview, the present amendment was discussed resulting in the Examiner indicating that Claims 76, 77, 81 and 82 are allowable for at least the reasons indicated for Claims 70 and 78, respectively.

Claims 41, 47, 51, 55, 57, 66, 79 and 81 are amended to overcome the outstanding objections. Claims 76, 77, 81 and 82 are amended to more clearly describe Applicants’ invention. Support for this amendment is found in Applicants’ originally filed specification. No new matter is added.

Applicants traverse the rejection of Claims 76 and 81 and note that 35 U.S.C. §112, 6th paragraph, states “[a]n element in a claim for a combination may be expressed as a means or step for performing a specified function without the recital of structure, material, or acts in support thereof, and such claim shall be construed to cover the corresponding structure, material, or acts described in the specification and equivalents thereof.” Thus, Applicants

Application No. 10/682,189
Reply to Office Action of March 10, 2005

submit Claims 76 and 81, when interpreted in light of the structure disclosed in the specification, are allowable for at least the same reasons as Claims 70 and 78, respectively.

Applicants further submit that amended Claims 77 and 82 are allowable for at least the same reasons as Claims 70 and 78, respectively.

Accordingly, in view of the present amendment and in light of the previous discussion, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance and respectfully request an early and favorable action to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Gregory J. Maier
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 25,599

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)

Michael E. Monaco
Registration No. 52,041

I:\ATTY\MM\AMENDMENT\0557\243741US.SUPP_AM DUE 6-10-05.DOC